

OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS 12.

ON THE *Portugal vol. 1.*

PORTUGUESE TRADE,

A N D

The Inexpediency of supporting the
HOUSE of BRAGANZA *H*

ON THE

THRONE of PORTUGAL:

WITH

A full Discussion of the pernicious Nature of some new pragmatistical Ordinances concerning Commerce, lately made in that Kingdom.

L O N D O N:

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OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS

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PORTUGUESE TRADITION

AND

The Influence of Tradition on

the Development of the Portuguese

ON THE

TRADITION OF THE PORTUGUESE

A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE PORTUGUESE

AND THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITION



OF THE PORTUGUESE TRADITION

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TRADITION OF THE PORTUGUESE

AND THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITION

OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS

ON THE

Portuguese Trade, &c.

SOON after John I. of Portugal had, about the middle of the last century, raised himself to the royal dignity, he observed the propriety of purchasing the friendship of England; and accordingly applied for that purpose to Oliver Cromwell, then at the Head of the English commonwealth, with fawning offers of extensive privileges to our fellow subjects trading to his dominions. He presumed not, however, at that time, to propose a league of defence; he was too well apprised of the Protector's cautious disposition,

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and contented himself with only binding us to him by ties of interest ; the strongest, indeed, in the world. But soon after the Restoration, the uncautious temper of Charles II. presented the monarch of Portugal with a fairer opportunity of compassing his ends ; and the marriage of the Infanta Catharine with our sovereign, gave rise to a treaty which fully satisfied his most faithful majesty ; in which that prince obtained stipulations in his own favour, engaging England to assist him with all her forces, when his necessities required so important an aid. The English monarch by his mediation also extorted from Spain an acknowledgment of that independence Portugal now glories in, and thus laid the foundation for that enmity to us, which hath always since that fatal period, been so predominant in the cabinet of Madrid. Every after administration here hath pursued the same impolitic measures, and constantly supported Portugal against Spain, without requiring, on the part of the court of Lisbon, a temper agreeable to the treaty on which the friendship between us and Portugal was originally founded. The Portuguese monarchs have so far availed themselves of this imbecillity in every British Ministry, that they have gradually stript us of our dear bought privileges in
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that kingdom, and now treat us as on the same footing with all other aliens.

It is needless, at this time of the day, to enquire whether the immunities promised in the treaty with Oliver Cromwell, joined with the national advantages stipulated for us by Charles II. were or were not an adequate consideration for our launching out into such a profusion of blood and treasure in the cause of Portugal, as has been lately advanced here; for we are not in possession of those privileges, nor ever are like to regain them while the court of Lisbon proceeds in the same career. What remains for our discussion is, whether, as things are now circumstanced, we ought to prefer an entire friendship with Spain, to that share of amity we now experience in Portugal; or, if we ought to go on supporting Portugal against the pretensions of Spain, or the sake of those commercial advantages still redounding to us from our traffic in the former kingdom. This is all that can properly now fall under our cognizance; and, in order to determine ourselves on this head, we need only recollect the present state of affairs in Portugal, and compare them with the advantages that necessarily must accrue to us from a thorough reconciliation with the Spanish crown,

crown, when further strengthened by the conquest of Portugal.

The sole advantage we receive in Portugal is, that we have free access to her ports, and can sell to her subjects such commodities as they will buy from us. That kingdom standing in need of divers foreign commodities, hath opened her ports for importation on the same terms to all European nations. English, French, Dutch and Germans, enjoy the same facility of commerce with Portugal, and pay the same duties to the crown in the name of customs, while the Portuguese furnish themselves from any that sell the best pennyworth. We have no right to a preference, much less to a monopoly, in Portugal. Would it be otherwise if Portugal was conquered by Spain? Most certainly not. No prince sets himself up in opposition to the interests of his subjects, and prevents them from buying on the best terms from foreign merchants what necessarily must be had, yet is not to be obtained within his own dominions. But is it reasonable that, in return for this privilege, common to all our trading neighbours, we should be curst with a needy dependent, always relying on us for aid in distress? Yet this is the case between us and our Portuguese ally.

ally. They are always asking, and never can give us any assistance in our wars. What then is the mighty benefit we reap from our connexions with Portugal? A free trade with her, such as other commercial nations enjoy, under the dreadful drawback of being her bully-back against Spain.

When there is war between Portugal and Spain, we protect the Portuguese coasts and her commerce. The Brazil fleets under our escort bring home the riches of her American dominions. We preserve her Lisbon from a Spanish bombardment, and keep the Tagus open for the conveyance of military stores, troops and provisions where necessary. A circumstance of the greatest importance in Portugal, a country where the victualing of armies in march is so very difficult. And to our great sorrow in the last war we did more; we repulsed the invaders with our best troops, and protected from Spanish bravery, the sinking crown of Portugal, while her subjects requited our kindness by reiterated insults on their defenders.

Now what are our reasonable expectations from a solid friendship with Spain enlarged by the conquest of Portugal? The first

first essential benefit concomitant of this event, would be the detachment of Spain from the interests of France. Spain would then feel herself able to walk without French leading-strings. No sovereign submits himself voluntarily to the guidance of another, or permits his country to be made a money province to his neighbour's dominions, if he can avoid it. No brother resigns himself, and his purse, in this manner, to his brother, unless necessity impells a surrender of this sort. The ties of relationship are, by far, too weak to effectuate such an unreserved submission. We may, therefore, most certainly conclude from our own feelings, that the court of Spain would be glad to emancipate herself from the tyranny of the elder branch at Versailles, and that she would joyfully lay hold of the first opportunity of courting the friendship of the only power in Europe that can ensure her independence on France, if that friendship was attainable. Our connections with Portugal, form the barrier of separation between us and Spain. His Catholic majesty must always look on Portugal as being a gem by force wrested from his diadem; and never can thoroughly reconcile himself to the sole supporter of the revolting Portuguese. If this bone of contention was out of the way, the cause of that eternal heart-burning,
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which prevails against us at Madrid, would be annihilated.

In order to be sensible of this truth, let us only consider in what manner we would regard a power that would run to the assistance of the Irish, and attempt to rescue them from the dominion of Britain. Is it possible to suppose that we could prevail on ourselves to enter into bonds of friendship with so hostile a power, while he continued his supporting hand with Ireland? Has not the court of Madrid the same ground of complaint against us, with respect to Portugal? In the year 1736, did we not equip, with an amazing rapidity, a fleet of above thirty ships of the line, and dispatch them to the assistance of Portugal, when only alarmed by a message from Spain? What can any Spaniard think of this conduct, towards a people whom they esteem in a state of rebellion against the monarchs of Spain? We must, therefore, renounce all pretensions to good sense, if we can suppose that a real friendship between England and Spain, is possible, while our Portuguese connections remain. But if that cause of quarrel was removed, in a Spanish conquest of Portugal, the Spanish and English interests would naturally combine the two nations in a firm league for their mutual defence;

fence; and in Spain we would find an ally able to assist, without depending on us for such extraordinary aids, as we must ever and anon send to Portugal. Spain would then have nothing to fear from France, but the disturbance of her Italian settlements, always dear to his Catholic majesty; and these we could easily defend, by means of our Sardinian ally, whose locality, with respect to France, must for ever bind him to our cause.

Would the court of Spain, in that case, balance between a confederacy with France or England? The difference in point of interest, is manifest; and princes, we know, are guided by that rule. Let us, therefore, examine it accurately. France, always a losing gamester in her contests with Britain, in the present situation of affairs, draws Spain into her quarrels, to their inestimable loss, as the late war testifies, and incessantly drains that kingdom of their wealth. But, on the event of a solid friendship between us and Spain, the latter would be clear of those dangerous bleedings. The ministry of Madrid would be at liberty to act in concert with the inclinations of their people, who still pant after peace with England, and war with all the world besides. We must, therefore, lay it down as a certainty, that

that the sovereign of Spain, would chuse, when possible, the English friendship preferable to that of France; especially when they could gain by the bargain, the valuable provinces now subject to the House of Braganza, and the extensive Brazils. Nor can we doubt but that, after such a proof of our amicable dispositions to Spain, our ships and their cargoes would be as welcome as now to Lisbon and Oporto. We must suppose the Spanish ministry mad, or assent to this proposition, that they would then prefer the friendship of Britain to that of France; because the former asks nothing in return, but a free trade, and the latter acts always as lord paramount of the Spanish dominions. In Britain, Spain would find a power able to protect her large coasts, and American plantations, from French incursions; and I think I may add, that she would be ashamed to exile our merchants from settlements protected by our arms. What an inundation of riches would this channel supply us with, much superior to what we draw by exporting gold from Portugal?

There are, I know, some who suppose that the Portuguese gold is absolutely necessary towards giving a currency to that paper money on which the credit of our

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Bank, merchants, and government, seems to rely for support. They further apprehend the most dismal consequences if this fountain of specie was closed; and they believe that we owe to some favourable direction of the Portuguese ministry, this great engine of state and commerce. But that this is all a mistake of too gross a nature to meet with our approbation, I shall clearly shew by stating that affair in a true light.

In the beginning of the 15th century, an edict appeared in Portugal, punishing with death the exportation of gold. But the necessities of commerce obtruded on Portugal a relaxation of that severity. They have no intestine commodities but wine, fruit and salt. These cannot purchase them the whole of the foreign manufactures they want for their own consumption and that of the Brazils. They must therefore pay the surplus in gold, besides what they can ballance with the articles abovementioned, or no body would deal with them. When this gold is paid, it is of no use to the foreign merchant, till it is carried to his own country, and laid under his free disposal at home. These considerations enforced the propriety of furnishing foreigners with a conveyance of their property to their respective countries.

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And this conveyance is king's ships, ships of war or packets belonging to crowned heads, which, by the law of nations, are not subject to be visited by the officers of the prince whose ports they enter. And it is certain that the merchants are not tyed down to use our ships of war or packets for this purpose, preferably to those of other nations. And we know that, in time of war between France and Britain, the merchants use Dutch ships of war, or other neutrals, preferably to ours, during that tumultuous season, because, under these circumstances, neutral royal ships are not liable to the danger of privateers; but at other times the English packets are chosen, because of their superior dispatch and a greater confidence reposed on these bottoms. In six weeks, from the time of placing the gold aboard one of our packets, a bill can be reported for the value at Lisbon. And one hundred moidores can be lodged here safe at London for less than one, the danger of the seas included. These conveniences are not to be found in the ships of war of any other nation, and will always assure to us that valuable piece of business, till some other nation can serve the English, French, Dutch and German dealers in Portugal,

with the same cheapness, safety and dispatch, which is not likely to happen.

The French ships of war, in particular, are not in repute for this business. The credit of their government is not ample enough to create a safe dependence on their faith. For altho' there have been packets established for this very purpose between France and Portugal, yet the French could never attain to a part of this carriage. Even their own merchants could not trust them; but all nations implicitly rely on English integrity, and gladly grasp at the uncommon dispatch afforded by our packets at so cheap a rate.

It is not therefore owing to any indulgence to England that we export gold from Portugal; nor doth this exportation depend on the favour of the Portuguese ministry for its continuance. We owe it to those circumstances which engage foreign merchants to employ us; and, while those circumstances remain, we must always enjoy that employment, rule who will in Portugal.

For some time after the traffic in the exportation of gold commenced at Lisbon, great circumspection was necessary towards
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conducting it safely, as the government pretended to require an observance of the law; but the necessities of commerce overbearing all other considerations, the ministry allowed some latitude, tho' they never annulled the law. But in this lenity, no respect was had to England. The interest of Portugal persuaded the court of Lisbon to overlook the practice, tho' they persevered, to appearance, in maintaining the dignity of their laws, tho' in this case impracticable to be enforced, by reason of the extention of their coast, and the facility of moving a commodity of this sort, which is far from being bulky. The English, however, neither in this case, nor any other, experience in Portugal better treatment than other strangers, who all have their consul and judge-conservator as well as the English. Nay, wherever a charter is granted to the natives, they have also a judge-conservator for protection of the rights of the charter: and these conservators are vested with powers far superior to those that are given to the conservators of the privileges of foreigners. The contractors with the government, relative to the excises on soap, tobacco, cards, &c. the people of the mint, the officers of the revenue, and many others, have each their charter and particular judge-conservator,
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under whose protection they are ranged, insomuch that charter-law constitutes the greatest part of the law of Portugal. But the residence of strangers in Portugal must have been very unsafe without this privilege, if not unsufferable.

The Portuguese ministry have lately erected so many trading companies among their own subjects, with conservators and exclusive privileges, that they have entirely altered the ancient system of trade in that kingdom, and deprived us, as well as all foreigners, of many commercial advantages they formerly enjoyed in Portugal and the Brazils. On the 13th of December, 1752, a law was issued, limiting the power of foreign conservators. This was a great blow struck at the liberties of aliens, and in particular deeply affected the English residing there. Soon afterwards almost all the trade of the Brazils, formerly open to all the born subjects of Portugal, and carried on by fleets and convoys, in which all merchants might in some degree participate, was confined to particular companies, endowed each with a charter and a conservator, with unlimited powers. The first of these charters is dated on the 7th of June, 1755, and comprehends the districts of Grand Para and Maranham.

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By this charter, it was granted to the company, that a great part of the effects brought home by them should be subject to one half of the duty only formerly paid when the trade was open to all the subjects, and that the company should recover their debts by distress, in the same manner as the royal revenue is gathered. All their commodities are put aboard of two frigates, furnished to them by the king; and all the members of this company, together with their clerks and servants, are under the protection of their conservator. From whence it is evident how difficult it must be, if not impossible, to recover debts from persons covered from the ordinary process of law, by such high protection; and consequently how injurious privileges of that nature must prove to those of our nation who trade to Portugal in the articles disposed of in this district.

On the 31st of August, 1756, there was established a company of the most dangerous nature to the English residing at Oporto, endowed with a monopoly of the wine trade of that province, a conservator and many despotic powers. By the constitution of this company, our whole business in the wine way is restrained to a small district,
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and laid at the mercy of the Portuguese who compose the company. We are not now at liberty to buy our wines where we can have them at the cheapest rates, of the best and richest quality, but must deal with the persons residing in a particular small district. The consequences of which restriction on our commerce are but too obvious. How hurtful this new regulation must prove to this branch of our traffic is too apparent. But this is not all: this company is provided with a sort of officers, called inspectors, who take an exact cognisance of our purchases, try the quality of our wines, demand an account of the several prices at which we bought them, afterwards value them according to their own fancies, and set marks on our casks, denoting their valuation often below the sums we paid for our goods. This curious enquiry, it is plain, unveils the mystery under which trade must be carried on; and is in its own nature calculated for first discovering and then precluding us of the remaining advantages of our former connexions with this kingdom. And the arbitrary powers of this grant demonstrate, without contradiction, a formed intention, of one day playing off on us the high authorities with which these grantees are vested. The powers of these monopolisers

fers resemble a clould ready to burst on the heads of our countrymen in the province of Oporto. And the injuries our merchants in Portugal daily receive from that quarter, have already given birth to too many just complaints to the British ministry, which fully evince that whether we carry our goods to Portugal, or draw from thence the productions of their soil, we must for ever continue exposed to Portuguese impositions, exactions and oppressions, while we carry on any trade with that too selfish kingdom, whose incessant efforts tend to the total extinction of our commerce all over their dominions, as will bye and bye further appear in the course of this performance.

The 12th of December, 1756, exhibited to the world in Portugal a new engine of fraud destined to protect their knavish countrymen from the ordinary prosecutions of justice for debt. A new court was then erected in Lisbon, with a jurisdiction of a very extraordinary sort, resembling that of a commission of bankruptcy. To this court any Portuguese may repair at any time at his own pleasure, and give up the key of his warehouse and books of account; by which ingenious device he stands exempted from actions at the suit of his creditors,

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who must in that case be satisfied with such a dividend as his effects appearing on his books will afford, and accept of it in full discharge of all proceedings, without farther access to any estate he may afterwards acquire. This court grants the debtor a general acquittance, without suffering his creditors a review of his books, which are deposited in the archives of the junto or board of commerce, as these judges stile themselves. The junto, indeed, examines the debtor and his books, but without the presence of his creditors, who are not even authorised to meet and scrutinize into the conduct of the person who thus eludes their demands. We all know that the meetings of creditors are often productive of important discoveries of injustices, and wrongs of the most astonishing kind. One creditor, it frequently happens, is apprized of one part of a story relative to the conduct of the debtor, and another gentleman from his knowledge supplies the meeting with a further account of circumstances relative to the same affair, till the whole work of darkness is fully laid open to the confusion of roguery. By this means, many scenes of iniquity come to light, which otherwise might have escaped the public attention, to the great detriment of injured honesty, and no small disappointment

pointment of vindictive justice. But no such meetings of creditors being authorised by the laws of Portugal, the consequences must be strongly encouraging to villainy. There the creditors have no right even to interrogate their debtor on oath, and his estate comes not under their management. It is laid entirely under the inspection of the officers of the *junto*, who act in all the debtor's affairs, as they please, being only answerable to a court who know nothing of the matter further than their accountants and clerks think fit to represent, and their representation is the rule of the *junto*'s proceedings. Nor is the advice of the creditors, much less their consent, demanded, either in any of the intermediate measures, or in the last act of their power, I mean the total acquittal of the debtor. This law is the more severe on foreigners, that the natives are always the debtors, who by the ingenious stratagem of petitioning the protection of the *junto*, get clear of all their debts, and obtain their affairs to be huddled up in the secret manner peculiar to this court, without the admission of the eyes of prying creditors into any of their concerns. Many instances can be given of the frauds perpetrated under this cover, and of the great damages our fellow subjects in Portugal

have thereby suffered, but it will suffice at present, to lay before the world one case of a worthy British subject, highly injured by these machinations to the extent of no less a sum than that of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. The case is well known on the Royal Exchange, where there are many persons of undoubted probity, who can vouch for its authenticity, and give every enquirer full satisfaction that the unfortunate sufferer hath been doomed to a long residence in Portugal, for the sole purpose of recovering this large debt, without the least appearance of success, which cannot be reasonably expected, while that iniquitous junto is permitted to exist.

The 6th of August of next year produced another new law of a very extraordinary nature, and noxious, I think, in the last degree to commerce. The law I have in my eye, is that relating to loans on bottomry, and forbidding more than five per cent. interest, the usual rate of interest in the kingdom to be taken on these loans. This law, it is evident, must totally discourage advances of money at so low a rate on this dangerous security, and consequently deprive the trade of the Brazils of those aids it formerly received therefrom.

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Nor can it escape any man's observation, that a law of this sort must be hurtful to trade in general, and of consequence hurtful to all traders, in which class our countrymen in Portugal are to be considered.

The Portuguese ministry rested not here in their plans to distress our trade, and that of foreigners in general. In the December following they established another junto or board of commerce subordinate to the former, whose business is kept an inviolable secret. This sub-junto is composed of the retailers of foreign commodities, whose vocation in the course of their business, calls them into foreign houses, where they, as dealers, enquire into the contents of foreign stores. It is indisputable that a corporation of this sort, having an office of intelligence, to which the report of the fruits of these researches is made, can always easily know the quantity of foreign goods of every sort in the market of Portugal; the quality and value of each piece, the circumstances of the possessor, and perhaps even the necessities which may oblige some particular persons to sell at an undervalue; so universal and particular a knowledge of the state of trade indubitably enables that body to make a certain judgment where each piece of goods is to be
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had at the lowest value, and what measures are the most proper to pursue, in order to beat down the prices. A disclosure of the minute occurrences which in this manner come to the knowledge of each member, thus placed in one point of view before the retailers in general, must certainly furnish them with informations of the most profitable sort, to persons engaged in their way, and at the same time of the worst consequence to importers, whose stocks, circumstances, necessities and views, by this means, become exposed to the very persons from whom all those facts ought to be most cautiously concealed. The very nature of the persons occupied in this commission, speaks the object of their erection, and demonstrates the prejudice that must inevitably thereby redound to all who have goods to dispose of, in a nation so well instructed in every article fit to determine their resolutions. For every man conversant in trade knows, that the prices of all goods rise and fall upon the presumed plenty or scarcity of the needed commodity, the circumstances of the venders, and the concealment of those matters which the Portuguese retailers become perfectly acquainted of by the studious care of these commissioners; in order by this sort of monopoly the better to oppress the foreign trade,

trade, by this means bringing the whole commerce of the city with foreigners, into one and the same interest and point of view.

The 30th of July, 1759, supplied us with a renewed evidence of the monopolising spirit of Portugal. A law then appeared for establishing an exclusive company over the districts of Pernambuco and Paraiba in Brazil, with powers analogous to those enjoyed over Grand Para and Maranham, and forbidding all others of the subjects to repair to those parts, with the addition of some particularities respecting the nature of that trade.

There now remained only the districts of Bahia and Rio Janeiro unappropriated to some trading company, the rest of Brazil being all chartered to one or other of the two companies abovementioned. But as the disposal of these districts (where the tobacco grows) to the sole use of a company, must have greatly hurt the valuable branch of the revenue arising from it, there appeared no possible method of monopolising these sole remains of the Brazil trade, except by confining that trade to licensed ships, which was accordingly done; and a law commanding this measure to be observed was accordingly issued under the
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stamp of royal authority, abolishing the antient manner of carrying on that commerce by fleets and convoys. This new regulation puts the capstone on the grand design of appropriation with respect to the Brazil trade, and hath delivered it wholly into the arms of monopolisers, a species of traders who may justly be denominated the bane of commerce, wherever they are created. The monopolies erected in Portugal, have in their consequences shut out the mercantile world from that country, and surrendered to a few, all the ordinary gains of dealing, while the monopolists of the Brazils have assumed to themselves exclusively, the great profits attendant on that invaluable trade. The feelings of the people here from engrossers among us, may readily convey to them an idea of the miseries consequent on the Portuguese monopolies, both to the constant inhabitants of that country, and those that go thither for the purpose of selling their goods. Before these monopolies were devised, we could vend our goods to whoever called for them. The whole of Portugal was open for contracts of a commercial nature. The Brazils too was our market by the way of Portugal. Now the tables are turned; the great companies exercise an equal tyranny over strangers and natives, and rob both
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of those profits which swell their coffers. Whatever might be our former prospects in Portugal, and from thence on the Bra-
fils, these channels of wealth are either narrowed to a shred, or quite diverted into the pockets of the exclusive companies. And to consummate our miseries, our debtors are protected by intestine conservators and juntoes, from the ordinary process of law, while the powers of foreign conservators are so abridged, that their authority affords us no safety from being treated like slaves.

These consequences, direful as they are in their effects, all spring from the royal authority of the house of Braganza; and whatever obligations that house lies under to England, it must be admitted that these regulations are of so hostile a nature to our trade, that worse could not be dreaded to prevail in Portugal, whatever royal house reigned there. Why then should we reach such a blow to the trade and manufactures of England, as to support in Portugal that majesty and face of government, which from day to day creates so many new obstructions to our trade? Unless England is determined to be a suicide, murder her own commerce, and preserve the destroyers of her highest interests, she must adopt a new
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plan of conduct towards a nation which hath so materially altered her measures towards our merchants. Was the motive never so strong, which in former days called us to support the house of Braganza on the throne of Portugal, that motive exists not now. We have now a sovereignty in that kingdom to deal with, which cuts our trade with its prerogative, as with a two edged sword, sets up monopolies to deprive us of our gains, protects our debtors from our prosecutions, and erects commercial boards of inquisition as hurtful to commerce, as spiritual courts of that nature are to religion.

We have been content to trade with the Portuguese as with the Spaniards, on the footing of a total exclusion from their American dominions, provided no alteration was introduced into the antient system of trade in Portugal; but that favour being denied us in a country where we have a right to exact it, there cannot now be figured any colourable reason why we should oppose a Spanish conquest of Portugal, or continue to observe treaties on our part, with a kingdom which hath so notoriously cancelled all our obligations to it, and annihilated that free trade our ancestors enjoyed with theirs. Was Portugal at th's
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moment a province of Spain, our merchants could not fear worse treatment there. On the contrary, it cannot be denied, but that these late regulations of which we complain, all leaning for support on the legislative power of the house of Braganza, would fall to the ground, by the expulsion of that royal authority which enacted these ordinances.

The mean and too selfish views of Portugal direct her to meditate every possible *coup de main*, whereby to curtail our usual profits, and gradually extinguish all our lucrative prospects on that kingdom. But since this is the determined resolution of the court of Portugal, can we reasonably fear a more hostile regnancy of councils at Lisbon. Many arguments drawn from experience, assure us, that a Spanish government in Portugal would act with a higher degree of rectitude, and disdain the tricky projects of the Portuguese administration so nearly allied in temper to fraud and peddling avarice. And if we would cultivate in earnest the friendship of Spain, by deserting Portugal, there can be no doubt reasonably entertained, but that very beneficial terms of accommodation with the court of Madrid would be readily granted, and as religiously observed, with that can-

dour so natural to a Spaniard. Every motive that can influence a great king, would unite their force, in order to induce his catholic majesty to a treaty, which promised so fair for the glory of Spain, the extention of the royal revenues, and the promotion of the trade of his subjects.

By these regulations, nearly as hurtful to the Portuguese as to us, the ducal family of Braganza hath delivered the trade of Portugal and the Brazils exclusively into the hands of a few engrossers, effectually annihilated all the commercial connexions formerly existing between this kingdom and Portugal, and left with us the sorrowful reflexion of having expended very idly our blood and treasure in support of a revolting subject, to the prejudice of a kingdom whose friendship the best policy always directed us to cultivate. We surely never had any motive but interest to engage us in defence of the claim of the Braganza family against the pretensions of Spain. Religion could have no share in that quarrel, since the house of Braganza professes the worst species of the Roman catholic religion. And morality could never direct us to interfere between the sovereigns of Spain, and the subjects of that kingdom. But where lies our interest now? Not in defending

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 and inquisitorial juntas, whose business
 lies in discovering the profits of our trade,
 the necessities of our merchants, and the
 extent of our stocks on hand, that they
 may grasp at every opportunity to break
 down our prices, and undermine our com-
 merce. Shall we for ever continue the
 dupes of a government which persecutes our
 mercantile interests in this manner? Or
 shall we, in consistence with good sense,
 and the soundest dictates of reason, relin-
 quish the support of a kingdom against
 Spain, in which we have no particular in-
 terest to pursue, which would not be as
 open to us at least, if not more, in case
 Portugal was now in possession of that
 crown? Prejudicial maxims of policy may
 lead us to go on in the same absurd tract
 of truckling to the perfidies of the revolt-
 ing house of Braganza. But cool reflexion,
 was it for one moment employed on this
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 dupes of a government which persecutes our
 mercantile interests in this manner? Or
 shall we, in consistence with good sense,
 and the soundest dictates of reason, relin-
 quish the support of a kingdom against
 Spain, in which we have no particular in-
 terest to pursue, which would not be as
 open to us at least, if not more, in case
 Portugal was now in possession of that
 crown? Prejudicial maxims of policy may
 lead us to go on in the same absurd tract
 of truckling to the perfidies of the revolt-
 ing house of Braganza. But cool reflexion,
 was it for one moment employed on this
 import-

important affair, would quickly persuade us to desist from the alliance of a prince who uses against us that very regal power, which our friendship to him continues in his family.

I might here shew that all these juntoes and chartered companies, are absolutely contrary to treaty with us, as that made in Oliver's time stipulates, *that the effects of our debtors shall not be screened from legal executions by protections from the king, or any other power*; and that made when Charles II. married the Infanta, gives us a free trade to the Brazils, with *comptoirs* in their American settlements, for the sale of our goods. But I will not pay the house of Braganza the compliment to suppose, that we should expect from that family, an observance of faith; or treat my countrymen in so despicable a light as to imagine, that they are silly enough to account it a disappointment, to learn that the court of Portugal hath broke all their treaties with us. No, that is not my aim. My true intention is, by a narrow inspection into our interest, to shew that we have no reason from INTEREST, to care whether the Portuguese receive their laws from Lisbon or Madrid; because the worst power on earth, if master of Portugal, could not use our
merchants

merchants worse than they are now treated in that kingdom. And how justifiable soever this conduct towards our countrymen might be in a prince of the royal house of Spain, it is utterly inexcusable in a descendant from John I. of Portugal.

It is too often pretended, that for the sake of the profit we make from our trade with Portugal, we ought not only to support the independency of the house of Braganza, but also to overlook their failures in point of faith, lest a Spanish conquest should totally deprive us of the whole of the Portuguese trade. And in order to refute this original mistake in our political system, this treatise is wrote, as well as to shew that we have no benefit in Portugal but what arises from the necessities of the Portuguese, and the beauty and utility of our goods, and consequently none of which we could be deprived by a Spanish conquest of the provinces composing that kingdom. For if Lisbon and Oporto were now subject to the crown of Spain, our manufactures would still be as welcome there as they are now at Cadiz or Corunna; that is to say, our goods would be just as saleable in Portugal subjected to the court of Madrid as in independent Portugal: a proposition so nearly self-evident, that I cannot

not enough admire how it came to be doubted, or rather denied.

If the necessities of the Portuguese and their ideas of the value of our manufactures could be annihilated by a Spanish conquest, or if Portugal could be on that event otherwise provided than as at this present time, there might be some colour for denying the proposition mentioned above. But since we are absolutely certain that none of these alternatives can happen from that alteration of the Portuguese allegiance, it is certainly nothing to us in point of commercial interest, whether a descendant of the ducal house of Braganza or a Spanish viceroy presides at Lisbon.

It is foolish to believe that in the case of the latter circumstance prevailing at Lisbon, the French only would be indulged in the exclusive right of disposing of their goods in Portugal. Is it so now in Spain? It neither is, nor can be so either in Spain or Portugal: for the French cannot supply them with goods of the agreeable quality of ours, and an universal revolt would in any kingdom be consequent of so injurious a restraint, as it would be conceived to be, to compel the people to buy goods they did not like, in place of those they esteemed,
and

and had been accustomed to wear. Spain has very lately exemplified this truth in the expulsion of the minister who attempted to deprive them of their cloaks made of English cloth. The Spanish ministry might be engaged, tho' much against the spirit of the Spanish nation, to enter into an English war in complaisance to the politics of France ; but the Spaniards were not to be terrified into the disuse of manufactures they approved of, and from their earliest days had worn, for the sake of gratifying a ministerial partiality to the court of Versailles. No kingdom will suffer their backs to be harrowed in this manner ; and that very recent experience above quoted, hath testified that Spain in particular will not submit to any such oppressive impositions. Even Russia, on a like occasion, taught us that the most enslaved nations will not yield to every arbitrary dictate of court arrogance, in opposition to their genius, interests and habits : compulsive means are always found insufficient under such circumstances. Nor can any probable motive be assigned proper to influence the court of Madrid to try so dangerous an experiment, as that of compelling their subjects to buy French goods preferably to those of their own choice. We may therefore lay it down as a certainty, that on the event of

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a Spanish

a Spanish conquest, Portugal would have the same liberty as now, to make purchases from foreigners indiscriminately, and wherever they could have the best pennyworth, to their liking.

Altho' our ministers have not seen these things in the same light, but have at a most enormous expence maintained the independency of Portugal, yet the Dutch, the best judges of commerce in the world, have always been convinced of the propriety of this reasoning, and never interfered in the political wars between Spain and Portugal, in consequence of a firm persuasion, that the commercial world had no interest in the question, whether a Spanish vice-roy or the duke of Braganza reigned at Lisbon. The same judicious system of politics has always prevailed at Vienna and Berlin. Altho' the inhabitants of Silesia furnish the Portuguese with linnens, as we do with woollens, toys and Birmingham wares, yet neither of these powers, when sovereigns of Silesia, ever imagined themselves on that account concerned in the protection of the house of Braganza against the resentment of Spain, because they easily comprehended that the Portuguese would not buy one yard of linnen the less, for their being subjected to the

the latter monarchy; and it is as plain that they would not for that reason use the fewer of our merchandises.

By our injudicious manner of reasoning on this and similar occasions, we actually contribute more than all other European nations besides, to the establishment of that universal monarchy in France, which we seem so much to dread. By our behaviour to Portugal, we compel the court of Madrid to throw itself into the arms of that of Versailles; and by our taking the part of Prussia against the house of Austria, we lay that house under the necessity of uniting itself with the family of Bourbon. Thus on both sides of the Pyrenees we practise the same imprudences, and constitute old Lewis, the protector of injured princes; thereby giving him an opening to the trade of their subjects, greatly to the detriment of our own merchants. But if we would avail ourselves of one moment's cool reflection on these incidents, we would plainly perceive that commerce and dominion are things of so different a nature, that there is not the least connection between them, at least in the affair now under our consideration; or, if there is, it is rather our interest that Portugal should be subject to Spain, because in that case the Portuguese

tuguese would not be indulged in the prosecution of those schemes that tend to the improvement of Portugal, and in their consequences must one day lessen our trade with its inhabitants. The house of Braganza encourages in their subjects an inclination to agriculture and manufactures, and forms every regulation that can be devised for encreasing the riches of their people. It is natural and reasonable that they should do so; but this conduct must in time lessen the demands of Portugal for British merchandises. And can we conceive that it would be so also, if Portugal was subject to Spain? We are certain it would not be so, because conquerors never consult the interests of the conquered; and Spain, when formerly in possession of Portugal, prevented, as much as was in their power, the improvement of that country, that they might hinder the Portuguese from emerging out of that state of weakness and subjection in which they chose to hold them. The nature of the thing teaches us that it must be so again, how soon Portugal is subject to Spain: and therefore, it neither is, nor can be, our interest to form an obstruction to that event.

Many and strong are the prejudices which blind our eyes in this interesting affair. At
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sometimes we are told that the ballance of trade between us and Portugal amounts at least to a million a year; and the great quantity of Spanish gold circulating in Britain, is produced in evidence of the lucrative nature of the Portuguese trade. At others it is urged, that many thousands of our laborious manufacturers depending for their daily sustenance on that commerce, it would be an experiment of too dangerous a nature, to suffer a total alteration of the system of public affairs in a kingdom to which we are so strongly attached, by so beneficial connections. But the whole force of this argument is nearly obviated by what is already said, in proof that our trade with Portugal depends not in the least atom of its structure on the continuance of the dominion of the house of Braganza. And lest any prejudicial fears on that subject should still rest in our breasts, on account of the supposed immensity of the Portuguese trade, and the great quantity of Portuguese gold in our dominions, I shall set that matter in a true light.

In order to which I must observe, that the supposition of the existence of so beneficial a trade between this kingdom and Portugal, is an assumption not at all vouched, and if maturely enquired into will

will be found to be a meer pretension without any foundation in fact or truth. From the Portuguese custom-house entries, compared with ours, there appears not the least colour for so bold an assertion. Those that have taken the trouble of looking most accurately into the state of the circumstances of that trade, by inspecting the entries of both nations, assure us, that the ballance upon the whole in our favour, after fairly examining the various branches of commerce carried on between England and Portugal, amounts not to three hundred thousand pounds at most ; a trifle compared with the boasting allegations of those that magnify so enormously the benefits we receive in that commerce.

Nor is the quantity of Portuguese gold always circulating in this kingdom, if rightly considered, any valid reason for our entertaining even a doubt to the contrary of what is here set forth as to the diminutive nature of the Portuguese trade : for the Hanse towns, Holland and Italy pay in the same coin : so that in truth, our Portuguese money is the ballance of almost all our traffic with the continent of Europe. From whence it is obvious, that we ought not to place to the credit of Portugal, every piece of gold that bears the image of the
dukes

dukes of Braganza. From which observations the reader may learn how deceitful appearances often are, and what a huge difference there is between putting a blind confidence in random declarations, tho' uttered with the greatest assurance and sterling truth, which alone can stand the test of a scrutinising enquiry. It is easy to assert that our trade with Portugal brings us in annually a clear ballance of a million of money, but far more difficult to convince the cautious enquirer of the truth of the fact. No evidence of such an immensity of gains in the Portuguese trade exists. And we may as well suppose the ballance of that trade in our favour to amount to ten millions as one by the year, if the *ipse dixit* of the asserter is to be accepted, as proof of the reality of that proposition. But be the favourable ballance of the Portuguese trade what it will, if we owe not that commerce to the favour of the dukes of Braganza, but to the superior quality of our goods ; it is of all fears the most womanish, to dread the extinction of our Portuguese trade from a Spanish conquest of Portugal.

The dukes of Braganza, ever since the expulsion of their fraternal allies the Stuarts, have behaved to England in the most ungrateful

grateful manner. They have gradually wormed us out of every distinctive privilege we enjoyed in Portugal, and thereby cancelled every obligation we lay under to that ducal family. The most endearing kindnesses from us have not been able to win them to England. We have to no purpose, protected them from the sword, from famine, and the devastations of earth-quakes. They still persist in the same ungrateful road, persecuting our trade and oppressing our merchants within their dominions; robbing them of their wealth by injurious protections and unjust sentences, and encouraging their subjects in indignities towards the English in that country.

This return, however, bad as it is, must be acknowledged the best which can be expected, for protecting a rebellious subject against the vindictive arrears of a prince pointed out by blood and nature to reign in Portugal. The present king of Spain, according to all the rules of succession known in England or other civilised nations, hath the lineal right to the Portuguese crown, in right of his mother, born sole heiress of the antient house of Parma, and representing the eldest of three co-heiresses of the antient royal family of Portugal. Why then should we combat a title
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approved of in our law, and confirmed by the assent of other civilised nations, in favour of a prince who makes treaties with the delusive view of trappanning our fellow subjects into his power, that he may plunder their houses and imprison their persons against the faith of treaties, and the known rights of denizons of this realm?

So rigorous is the present duke of Braganza to our fellow subjects in Portugal, that he hath deprived them of the right of having a judge conservator of their privileges, so that they lie open to the persecutions of the ordinary judges of the kingdom, while they have no tribunal to apply to for compelling payments of debts, or obtaining a redress of injuries. Is this usage tolerable in a prince so greatly indebted to England? I only lay before the public a naked state of facts. Let every true Englishman lay his hand to his heart, and consider how the relation of these facts affect him, or if he can suffer without the deepest resentment, the reading of a recital so ignominious to his country, as well as disgraceful to the duke of Braganza.

In Spain our fellow subjects complain of no injuries like these they groan under in Portugal, a country which our merchants

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would

would willingly desert, if they could only recover ten shillings in the pound of the debts due to them by the Portuguese. Why then should we continue to defend in Portugal a government which uses our merchants so unjustly preferable to one which treats them with kindness? Our present patriot ministers, it is to be hoped, will look more narrowly into our interests, and the true dignity of this nation, than to pursue the same incongruous system of politics, which hath hitherto prevailed towards Portugal.

The friendship of Spain is surely worth having, especially when it may be so cheaply obtained, by the sacrifice of a prince, whose alliance so strongly disgraces and hurts us. It is probable the king of Spain will make us a better return for our friendship. At least he cannot make us a worse. In giving up the interests of the house of Braganza, in compliment to the superior title of his catholic majesty to the crown of Portugal, we have every thing that's good to hope for, and nothing to fear. By that step we cannot introduce into Portugal, an administration more hostile to Britain, and we may obtain by this means, in that country, the establishment of a more humane, just and benign government. Nay, it cannot

not be regarded as presuming to go further, and expect from the known generosity of the Spanish nation, a kinder reception in Portugal from Spain regnant in that kingdom, than from independent Portugal. At least it is prudent to try where we may gain and cannot lose.

A solid and unfeigned union of interests with Spain, would probably entitle us to a participation in the trade of the Spanish West-Indies. The great kingdoms of Peru and Mexico would then be open to the visits of our merchants, where we should find a market for the consumption of our manufactures, far exceeding in extent what could be had in the Brazils, tho' we were in possession of every privilege stipulated in Oliver Cromwell's treaty with Portugal. But the spirit of the treaty concluded with that kingdom by Charles II. is too regnant in our politics, and binds us to a perpetual state of servitude to a nation where the current of enmity is so strong against us, that the council attending the bar of their supreme court, dare not patronise our causes, lest they incur the resentment of the minister who opposes all our commercial views, and supremely disposes of all lucrative offices.

Unless we are actually resolved to murder our national trade, and ruin our commercial subjects, we will make a due estimate of our interests in the family of Braganza, and finally break with a ducal house, which persecutes with such asperity our merchants within their dominions, in case, after due reflection, we find, as it is plain we will, that our interest calls us not to support that house on the throne of Portugal. All obligations once incumbent on us by treaties, to preserve the Braganza family in the sovereignty of the Spanish provinces they hold, are released by their breach of faith to us. They have encroached on that free trade we have a right to in their European dominions, and totally excluded us out of their American settlements. They protect our debtors from our prosecutions, contrary to the most solemn stipulations, and with the same spirit of perfidy, they have divested our conservators of that jurisdiction to which they have the best right in the world. All treaties between us and Portugal are therefore cancelled; so it only remains to be considered, what our interest in the present situation of affairs between us and that kingdom points out for our rule of conduct towards it. And what that is, I think

think may be easily gathered from the foregoing sheets.

It will not, I hope, be objected that I have only argued from a supposition of consequences taking place, which have not as yet happened, and may only possibly exist, so may never be. It is indeed true that I have only given my readers a narrative of general laws, and founded my reasoning on the consequential ills which such laws must be naturally productive of, because I would not swell this performance to an undue length, or insist on what is not self-evident. But the memorials of our merchants to the British ministry hitherto quite ineffectual, are too full of well authenticated facts, which indisputably prove that those laws have loaded our fellow subjects in Portugal with all the ills those mischievous edicts were calculated to exhibit to the world. If we can place any confidence in the remonstrances of our brethren in Portugal, these bad consequences have already taken place, and are daily growing. But without entering into discussions of that nature, the argument founded on the existence of laws in that kingdom, in the consequences destructive of our commerce, is absolutely conclusive against our placing a further confidence in the house of Braganza,

ganza, unless we will be mad enough to affirm, that the man who draws upon us is not to be treated as an assassin, till he has buried his sword in our bowels. Evils so generally succeed menaces, that a man must fall unpitied, who trusts himself defenceless within the power of the threaten-er of his life.

I can quote but too many unjust sentences in Portugal, defying law and common sense, in order to defraud and oppress the British in that kingdom. These will come in due time to the knowledge of the legislature of this nation, and of course to that of the public. But setting these at present to one side, as being defective in point of notoriety, it is undeniable that edicts foreclosing a people of free trade, who by treaty have a right to *such free trade as formerly carried on*, are infractive of public faith, leave the injured free to chuse honest allies, and divert their interest into a new channel. And it is as certain, that grants of protections against the claims of a nation who have stipulated by treaty, that no such protections shall be issued to their prejudice, entitle the deluded nation to withdraw from the amity of so deceiving a promiser, and annihilates that interest which formerly joined the contracting parties.

ties. It never can be the interest of a nation of merchants, to continue friendship with so perfidious a power. And for these reasons, most obviously self evident, I conclude, that whatever interest formerly bound us to the house of Braganza, that interest is now annihilated, together with those moral ties resulting from treaty, which obliged us to defend that house in the possession of the crown of Portugal. Our interest now hands us into better paths, and points out to us the royal house of Spain, as the future ally destined by Providence for our most cordial friendship, thus combining national advantage with natural rectitude, and courting our secession from a family founded in incestuous love, and hourly guarding its ill-got possessions with ramparts of blood. How many dukes, how many nobles, has the present duke of Braganza sacrificed to his despotism? How many has he imprisoned and banished? The annals of Portugal will record his bloody inhumanity to the latest generation. Is so base a family a fit ally for this free people? Is it fit that we should sacrifice to such a prince, the interests of our commerce and merchants in Portugal? The nation, I hope, will duly consider this, before it is too late, and vindicate, in
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a proper manner, the dignity of our crown,
and the rights of our subjects, or renounce
for ever the name of freemen and Britons.

F I N I S



